

USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr visits Tulare County



State Director Higgins, Rep. Nunes, Under Secretary Dorr, Western Milling Manager Tony Correia, and Chris Donati tour an ethanol plant.

In August, USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr joined Rep. Nunes and a number of local officials for a tour of Tulare County to see the work that is currently being performed by USDA Rural Development.

“Whether it’s an ethanol plant or industrial park, a day care center or a critical care medical facility, investments made by USDA Rural Development are building a better future for rural residents in Tulare County and throughout the nation,” said

Under Secretary Dorr.

Mr. Dorr, along with USDA Rural Development California State Director Ben Higgins, made stops in Tulare, Woodlake, and Lindsay to look at infrastructure developments and improvements.

“Bringing Under Secretary Dorr out to the San Joaquin Valley gives him a perfect opportunity to see firsthand the positive work that USDA Rural Development is accomplishing,” said Rep. Nunes.



Supervisor Jim Maples, State Director Ben Higgins, Supervisors Connie Conway, Phil Cox, Allen Ishida and Steve Worthley, Under Secretary Thomas Dorr and Rep. Devin Nunes at a grant presentation in Tulare.

Inspector General Releases Report on California Rural Legal Services Violations in the San Joaquin Valley

In 2005, a confidential source contacted Representative Nunes with information regarding activities being performed by California Rural Legal Services (CRLA), which is a grantee of Legal Services Corporation (LSC). The source was a former employee of the CRLA Modesto office and claimed to have evidence that they had been consistently violating federal law in many of their activities.

The Congressman immediately contacted the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and subsequently referred the source to them. The OIG immediately began an investigation that has finally



CRLA violated federal law by engaging in impact litigation related to farm workers

reached preliminary findings on a number of claims.

Specifically, the OIG was able to establish that CRLA was using federal dollars to conduct “impact litigation” based on their pet issues, rather than helping serve needy clients in the area. The OIG also found that

CRLA was “client shopping,” which also cut into their ability to help underprivileged individuals in need of legal assistance.

“CRLA has abused taxpayer dollars at the expense of poor folks in the Valley. Rather than helping people, they have squandered mil-

lions harassing business with serial litigation,” said Rep. Nunes.

The report also states that a number of charges were not able to be proven due to the fact that CRLA failed to produce documents requested by the OIG. Those complaints included working on cases for undocumented persons and engaging in lobbying activities.

He later added, “This report simply affirms what we have known for years about CRLA but were not able to prove until the confidential source came forward and I thank her for being brave enough to do so.”